THE Chriſtian Hiſtory;

Containing Accounts of the Propagation and Revival of Religion in *England Scotland* and *America*.

Saturday FEBRUARY 18. 1743,4. § N°. 51.

The Rev. Mr. PORTER's *Account of the Revival of Religion at* Bridgewater *finiſhed.*

ABOUT *this Time*, through the infinite Compaſſion of GOD, I had a very lively Senſe of divine and eternal Things on my Mind from Day to Day. My Meditations run very much at this Time on the *awful State* Man had plunged himſelf into by the Fall: On *Regeneration*, its Inſtantaneity, Greatneſs, and Neceſſity: On Man's Weakneſs and *Inability* to help himſelf and effect this Change: On Man's *Unworthineſs* of Mercy; and the *Juſtice* of GOD ſhould he damn him after he had done his beſt: On CHRIST the only Way to the FATHER; on his *mediatorial* Fulneſs and tranſcendent Glories; on his perfect *Righteouſneſs*, as the only Matter of a Sinner's Juſtification before GOD, excluſive of all Works; on *receiving* it by *Faith*: On the *Change* of *Heart* that followed thereupon, how it left the Impreſs of the divine Image on the Soul: On the unſpeakable *Sweetneſs* and *Satisfaction* in a Life of Religion and Communion with GOD: On *Aſſurance* of the Love of GOD; its Attainableneſs and Priviledge: On having our *Converſation* in *Heaven*: On living like Creatures made for Eternity, and accountable to GOD: On our *Capableneſs* of enjoying GOD the chief and only Soul-ſatisfying Good for ever and ever. Theſe with ſome of the like Nature and Tendency, were much in my Mind. And I was therefore under ſome Conſtraint to inſiſt on them from Sabbath to Sabbath. Which I urged & preſſed with as great a Warmth and Pathos as I was capable of. And have Reaſon to believe that theſe Diſcourſes, thus delivered, on theſe Goſpel Subjects; (tho' it may be not with ſuch Accuracy and Correctneſs as ſome not under a divine Influence might have inſiſted

upon, and ſo to them might have appeared Fooliſhneſs) were bleſſed to the Good of Souls, and were *to them the Wiſdom of GOD and the Power of GOD.*

Tho' but few, I believe, were as yet ſavingly *converted* and brought Home to CHRIST, yet the Concern on the Minds of moſt continued and increaſed thro' the *ſucceeding Summer.* The moſt were uncommonly thoughtful about the Salvation of their precious Souls.

But as I remember in the *Beginning* of the *Fall* 1741, *Convictions* ſeemed at a Stay, if not declining and wearing off from ſome.

But upon this, *Two young Men* of *Bridgewater*, who had been for a Time in CONNECTICUT (one had *paſſed through his academical Learning* and was keeping School there; the other was then a *Member* of *Yale College*) and had ſeen the great Things GOD was doing for his People there; and in a Judgment of Charity had felt and experienced much of the Power of divine Grace on their own Souls; returned to *Bridgewater* to viſit their Friends. And O the *Concern* they appeared to have (and we have no Reaſon to think but it was real) for their Town's-folk, eſpecially *fellow Youth*, is not eaſily to be expreſſed: Which they manifeſted in all ſuitable and proper Ways.

They told our *young People* that on *ſuch a Day*, if they were willing, they would meet with them and ſing and pray, and give them a Relation of the great Things GOD was doing in CONNECTICUT, and what he had done for *them* ſince they ſaw them laſt. To which they readily conſented. When *the Day* came, young and old went: And I believe I ſhould have gone, had I not been providentially abſent. Accordingly they did pray and ſing with them, and gave them a *friendly chriſtian Exhortation.* And the LORD was with them, I doubt not. Some were *awakened*; and thoſe under Concern, had their *Concern increaſed* by Means thereof. And ſeeing ſuch Effects following, they went on in this Way for a While; if not at the Advice, yet at the Connivance of ſome of the Miniſters in the Town. And whether their Practice or our Connivance was juſtifiable, as Things were then circumſtanced, I ſhall not take upon me now to ſay. But this I think I am obliged to ſay; That if I believe the Work going on ſo remarkably to be Divine, as I moſt firmly do, they were greatly ſerviceable in promoting it in my

dear

dear Charge. Here I would obſerve, that theſe were *the only Exhorters* we have had. I think we have had no Appearances of them ſince.

After this that grand and important *Queſtion* was in the Mouths of *moſt of my People*, eſpecially *young* People, *What muſt we do to be ſaved? Salvation* ſeem'd now to be the main Concern of their Souls, and the main Buſineſs of their Lives. Their ſecular Affairs were at this Time, in Appearance, made a By-Buſineſs. *Meetings* on Account of *Religion* were ſought after, long'd for, frequently attended, exceedingly thronged. And *at almoſt every Meeting* about this Time (which were very frequent) it evidently appeared GOD was with us in the *convincing* & *converting* and *comforting Influences* of his SPIRIT. Some were *awakened*, many crying out under a Senſe of their Sin and Danger. Some *hopefully converted*: And ſome *tranſported* and over-born with a Senſe of the Love of GOD. I make not the leaſt Doubt, but there was Joy in Heaven among the Angels, as well as among the Saints on Earth, in ſeeing and hearing of the glorious Diſplays of the infinite Power and ſovereign free Grace of GOD at our religious Meetings. O it looked probable now that the whole Society, Old and Young, Black and White, would have been ſeized by the almighty Power and free Grace of GOD; and would have been brought to have ſubmitted to a ſovereign GOD in CHRIST, and received a whole CHRIST with a whole Soul. My Soul did leap within me with Joy at the bleſſed Proſpect I now had of all joining Heart and Hand in travelling in the Way to eternal Glory, and of arriving there at laſt. But this bleſſed Shower did not long continue. It was not long before GOD (for our Sin in not improving, and our Ingratitude under theſe Showers of divine and heavenly Grace) did depart from us as to the *convincing* and *converting* Influences of his SPIRIT. And many of thoſe that were under good Impreſſions, and had not received Comfort in CHRIST, which many had, gradually loſt them, and began to be ſomewhat careleſs and ſecure again. Now and then, 'tis true, I had the Joy of ſeeing and hearing one *convinced* and *converted*, and it has been to this Time; but 'tis rare, like Gleanings after the Vintage.

Now all along in this Time I did freely invite and gladly improve as I had Opportunity, all my zealous Fathers and Brethren in the Miniſtry, living in the Neighbourhood and

that travelled (who had been remarkably bleſſed by GOD in promoting his Work) to preach to my People. I think I can truly ſay, (*tho' the Spirit of Man luſteth to Envy*) I am willing GOD ſhould ſend by the Hand, by whom he would ſend; ſhould carry on his own Work in his own Way, by ſuch Means and Inſtruments as pleaſes him; willing I am, at Times eſpecially, with St. JOHN the *Baptiſt* to *decreaſe*, in Name, Succeſs and all ſo that CHRIST may *increaſe*, his Kingdom and Intereſt be advanced in my Charge, and thro' the World. And I don't yet repent of this my Conduct, but greatly rejoice in it. For as far as I can learn, every one that has been with us preaching the everlaſting Goſpel, have been inſtrumental of doing Good to ſome Souls: And who would mourn at that? I will acknowledge that they have been greatly ſerviceable to the People of my Charge: They, and not I, are the ſpiritual Fathers of *many* of my Flock. Nor do I ſee any of the bad Effects of ſuch Conduct, which many talk of; my People; ſuch of them as have been converted by the inſtrumentality of Strangers, love me their unworthy Paſtor better than ever, I doubt not: And therefore I have Reaſon to think, that had Miniſters been more free in inviting and improving neighbouring Miniſters, and them that travelled to their People; the Work of GOD would have gone on more glorioufly, and would have prevented the unhappy Jarrs, Diviſions and Separations that have ariſen in ſome Places.

But I'll return, and ſay, that in the Judgment of Charity, thro' the infinite Compaſſions of GOD, that the Number is not ſmall that have been ſavingly wrought upon among us in this great Day of Grace, and that are become real lively Chriſtians. I believe 'tis not proper to ſay how many: tho' I believe by what I can learn as many in Proportion to the Bigneſs of the Place, as almoſt any Place that has been remarkably viſited at this Day. We have had added to the Church between *ſeventy* and *eighty*; beſide a *conſiderable Number* that have *owned the Covenant* and been *baptiſed*, that have not ſeen their Way clear to come to the Ordinance of the holy Supper. The moſt of which are able to give to every one that aſks them with Meekneſs and Fear all the Satisfaction that can rationally be deſired or expected, that they are real Chriſtians. They can give a clear, diſtinct Account of a preparatory *Law-Work* in all the Parts of it; of their Diſcovery

Diſcovery of CHRIST in his Ability and Willingneſs to ſave them in particular, & every Way ſuited to their periſhing Circumſtances, to make them compleatly and eternally happy; of their *cloſing* in with him as offered in the Goſpel; of the *Change* of *Heart*; and ſo conſequently of Principles, Deſires, Inclinations and Affections that perceptibly followed thereupon. And of their *Lives* and *Converſations*, as far as I can obſerve myſelf, and learn from the unprejudiced, are correſponding and agreeing with their Experiences: They live in general as becomes the Goſpel, and evidently adorn the Doctrine of GOD our Saviour. In a Word, they appear to love GOD and *Men:* which is expreſſed by a careful and conſcientious Diſcharge of *Firſt* and *Second-Table Duties*; and ſo are truly religious.

And now theſe, GOD is through his abundant Goodneſs, frequently viſiting and refreſhing by the gracious Influences of his HOLY SPIRIT. For altho' GOD has almoſt departed from us as to the *convincing* and *converting* Influences of his SPIRIT; yet he has *not*, as to the *quickening*, *ſanctifying* and *comforting* Influences thereof: Bleſſed be his Name for it. GOD is verily with us in our religious Meetings. 'Tis frequent on *Lecture-Days* and on *Lord's-Days*, while we are ſupplicating the *Divine Majeſty*, ſinging the high Praiſes of GOD, hearing his Word, celebrating the holy Supper, that we ſee ſome of the above-mentioned Influences. Sometimes many of them have their frail Tabernacles overborn with a Senſe of the great and diſtinguiſhing Love of GOD the FATHER in contriving, SON in purchaſing, and SPIRIT in making Application of Redemption to their Souls. Sometimes they have ſuch a Senſe of the *Perfections* of GOD, his Holineſs, Juſtice, Mercy, Faithfulneſs, *&c.* as greatly weakens and overcomes the Body. They have often ſuch ſweet Taſtes of redeeming Love, and ſuch bleſſed Diſcoveries of the Glories of GOD, Beauties of CHRIST, Holineſs and Happineſs of Heaven; as affects the Body ſo greatly, that Spectators have been ready to conclude that it would have diſſolved the natural Tye and Union between the Soul and Body: and that their Souls would have actually diſmiſſed and left their Bodies, and been conveyed by kind guardian Angels in a Chariot of Love to the GOD and Region of Love. O to ſee them in theſe Frames, is enough to make any New Creature rejoice: Methinks 'tis enough to warm the Souls,

Souls, of all that have experienced a Work of Grace, and ſo know ſomething of the Enjoyment & Employment of Heaven; to ſee them at theſe Seaſons, like the Birds of Paradice, chanting forth the Praiſes of our glorious REDEEMER: They do in ſome low Degree reſemble the humble Worſhippers of Heaven.

I am almoſt ſure that none that have had given them, a ſmall, a little Taſte of the ſpecial Grace of GOD, ('tis ſo ſweet) will with the elder Brother in the Parable, ſtumble and wonder, tho' others are feeding on *the fatted Calf*, or have larger Meaſures; but will be able to account for the Muſick and dancing, the Joys and Rejoycings of returning Prodigals, and will come in, and rejoyce with them. For 'tis undeniably true, that by *a little* here, we can tell what a *great Deal* means. And to ſee the Effects theſe Diſcoveries have on them; how humble, holy, heavenly, loving, and weaned from the World they are for a conſiderable Time after, is abundantly refreſhing and ſatisfying, and confirms further that their Diſcoveries are true and genuine. Thus they are frequently viſited and taught by the HOLY SPIRIT: ſo that they are *growing Chriſtians*, in *Grace* and *Knowledge*. In *Grace*, every true Viſit evidently transforms them more and more into the divine Image and Likeneſs: In *Knowledge*, 'tis wonderful to ſee how their Knowledge is increaſed, as to GOD, CHRIST, the *Doctrines of Grace*; and as to *themſelves*, their own *Hearts*, the Pride, Envy, Hypocriſy, Deceit and Ingratitude of them: They ſee and know ſo much of their own Vileneſs, that every one looks on himſelf as the moſt unworthy, and greateſt Miracle of Mercy, and moſt beholden and indebted to the free Grace of GOD: They are labouring after *progreſſive Holineſs*, to be perfect as their HEAVENLY FATHER is perfect. GOD grant their *Path* may continue to be as *the ſhining Light that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect Day*.

Now of this Number, many of them were, before this Day of *GOD's ſearching our Jeruſalem with Candles*, as *exact* and *ſtrict* in the Performance of the *Externals* of *Religion*, (as far as could be obſerved by Man,) as any among us, and had gained the Charity of their Neighbours: But *now ſee* they *built upon the ſandy Foundation of their own Righteouſneſs*; and ſo had periſhed eternally notwithſtanding their blazing Profeſſions, & the good Opinion of others, had not GOD in Mercy opened

opened their Eyes, to ſee the Way of Salvation by CHRIST, and enabled them to embrace it. O may *all Profeſſors* every where examine the Foundation they build upon for eternal Happineſs; and ſee they don't deceive themſelves, as ſome did among us 'till this Day of great Grace!

The reſt that have been wrought upon among us have been *moſtly young People*, who were not Profeſſors in the full Senſe before.

As to *Children, under ten*; I durſt not ſay any are included in the aboveſaid Number; tho' they were at firſt when the Work began under ſome Concern of Soul; yet it ſeems worn off, they are Children ſtill.

As to the *vicious* and *immoral*; we had ſome, tho' I believe as few as in moſt Places. But I don't obſerve any remarkable Change and Alteration in them. Tho' the Revival of Religion ſeems in ſome Meaſure to check and reſtrain them from that Boldneſs in ſinning that appeared in them before.

We are *generally*, thro' the Goodneſs of GOD upon us, united and agreed in the Belief of the *Work's* being *divine*; and are uſing ſuch Methods as GOD directs to, and bleſſes in promoting and carrying of it on. *O how good and pleaſant tis for Brethren* of one Society *to dwell together in Unity. It is like the precious Ointment*, &c. *As the Dew of Hermon*, &c.---*For there the* LORD *commands the Bleſſing, even Life forevermore.*

As to *Antinomianiſm* and *enthuſiaſtical Frenzies*; there are little or no Appearances among us. Indeed there is that among us that an *Arminian* would account *Antinomianiſm*, and one that never felt the Power of divine Grace on his own Heart would account *Enthuſiaſm*. But this don't make it ſo. As far I am capable of judging, their *Principles* and *Practices* are *ſcriptural*. GOD grant I may never have the melancholly Occaſion to think or ſay otherwiſe.

As to *Trances, Viſions, &c.* we have none, and I think have had none from the Beginning.

And now I would thankfully acknowledge and heartily bleſs GOD for his diſtinguiſhing Goodneſs to *me* and *my Charge*: in giving us to ſee, and live in a *Day* of ſuch great Grace as this is; And in making ſo many of us Partakers of his *ſpecial Grace*: Whom I make not the leaſt Doubt, all the Saints of GOD will e're long ſee, cloathed in white, at the right Hand of JESUS, and with him entering into everlaſting Habitations; to join the heavenly Quire, in tuning their

their Golden Harps in Songs of Praiſe to the ETERNAL THREE; the FATHER, for his Mercy, the SON for his Merit, and the HOLY GHOST for his Efficacy, forever and ever. LORD JESUS be like a Roe or a young Hart on the Mountains of Separation.

Bridgwater, Octob. 12th, 1743. JOHN PORTER.

P. S. The above Account as far as it relates to the Riſe, Progreſs and Continuance of the Work of GOD among US was read to our Church, and voted by them to be a true and faithful Account according to their Judgment.

John Porter.

A Brief Account of the Revival of Religion at SOMERS *in the County of* Hampſhire, *in the Province of the* Maſſachuſetts; *in a Letter from the Rev. Mr.* SAMUEL ALLIS *to the late Rev. Mr.* COOPER *of* Boſton.

Somers, May 22d. 1742.

Rev. and dear Sir,

FRom the ſmall Acquaintance I have had with your ſelf, and knowing how much your Heart is ſet upon the Advancement of the Intereſt of CHRIST and his Kingdom in the World; I perſuade my ſelf it will be grateful to you to hear of the Flouriſhing of Religion in any Part of the Land. GOD hath been in a moſt wonderful Manner pouring out of his SPIRIT upon many Towns in this *County*: But I think none have ſhar'd ſo plentifully (I don't ſpeak by Way of boaſting, but acknowledge the ſovereign Grace of GOD) of the Power, the Grace, and Mercy of GOD, *Convincing* of Sin, of Righteouſneſs, and Judgment, and of being brought to the *Embracement* of the LORD JESUS CHRIST upon the Terms of the Goſpel, as this People hath. *To GOD be all the Glory*: All the Praiſe belongs to him. There is ſuch an evident and apparent Alteration in the *Lives*, Converſation and Tempers of Men that I am ſure nothing but the almighty Power and Grace of GOD could effect.

(*To be continued.*)